

Amendment to the Claims

Please cancel claim 34 without prejudice.

Claim 17 (previously presented) A method for transmitting an e-mail message comprising the steps of:

receiving the e-mail message at an intermediate address, the e-mail message including non-preferred e-mail address data, the e-mail message having been previously transmitted to an invalid e-mail address and transmitted back to a sender e-mail address;

parsing the non-preferred e-mail address data from the e-mail message at the intermediate address and determining if there is preferred e-mail address data associated with the non-preferred e-mail address data; and

storing, at a location associated with the intermediate address, the non-preferred e-mail address data when it is determined that there is no preferred e-mail address data associated with the non-preferred e-mail address data.

Claim 18 (original) The method as recited in Claim 17, further comprising the step of:

transmitting the e-mail message to the preferred e-mail address when preferred e-mail address data is associated with the non-preferred e-mail address data.

Claim 19 (original) The method as recited in Claim 18, further comprising the step of sending a return e-mail message to a sender address from the intermediate address indicating that the e-mail message has been sent to the preferred e-mail address.

Claim 20 (original) The method as recited in Claim 17, further comprising the step of sending a return e-mail message to a sender address from the

intermediate address indicating that the e-mail message was not forwarded to the preferred e-mail address.

Claim 21 (original) The method as recited in Claim 20, further comprising indicating to the sender that the intermediate address will withdraw the e-mail message upon receiving a request from the sender address.

Claim 22 (original) The method as recited in Claim 17, further comprising the step of transmitting an e-mail message to the preferred e-mail address indicating that a user at a sender e-mail address is attempting to transmit an e-mail message to the non-preferred e-mail address.

Claim 23 (original) The method as recited in Claim 17, wherein the storing step further comprising the step of:

storing the non-preferred e-mail address data until a recipient registers the preferred e-mail address data.

Claim 24 (previously presented) A method for transmitting an e-mail message that has been sent from a sender address to a previously-known recipient e-mail address and rejected at the previously-known recipient e-mail address and transmitted back to the sender address, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving the rejected e-mail message at an intermediate address;

determining a preferred recipient e-mail address from the rejected e-mail message; and

storing, at a location associated with the intermediate address, the previously-known recipient e-mail address when it is determined that there is no preferred recipient e-mail address associated with the previously-known recipient e-mail address.

Claim 25 (original) The method as recited in Claim 24, further comprising the step of:

transmitting the e-mail message to the preferred recipient e-mail address when a preferred recipient e-mail address is associated with the previously-known recipient e-mail address.

Claim 26 (original) The method as recited in Claim 24, further comprising the step of sending a return e-mail message to a sender address from the intermediate address indicating that the e-mail message has been sent to the preferred recipient e-mail address.

Claim 27 (original) The method as recited in Claim 24, further comprising the step of sending a return e-mail message to a sender address from the intermediate address indicating that the e-mail message was not forwarded to the preferred recipient e-mail address.

Claim 28 (original) The method as recited in Claim 27, further comprising indicating to the sender that the intermediate address will withdraw the e-mail message upon receiving a request from the sender address.

Claim 29 (original) The method as claimed in Claim 24 further comprising the step of transmitting an e-mail message to the preferred recipient e-mail address indicating that a user at a sender e-mail address is attempting to transmit an e-mail message to the previously-known recipient e-mail address.

30.(original) The method as recited in Claim 24, wherein the storing step further comprising the step of :

storing the non-preferred e-mail address data until a recipient registers the preferred e-mail address data.

Claim 31 (previously presented) A method for transmitting an e-mail message that was sent from a sender address to a previously-known recipient e-mail address that is associated with a first service provider, and rejected at the previously-known recipient e-mail address and transmitted back to the sender address, the method comprising the steps of:

- receiving the rejected e-mail message at a second address;

- determining whether there is a preferred recipient e-mail address, that is associated with a second service provider, from the rejected e-mail message; and

- storing, at a location associated with the intermediate address, the previously-known recipient e-mail address when it is determined that there is no preferred recipient e-mail address associated with the previously-known e-mail address.

Claim 32(previously presented) A method for transmitting an e-mail message that has been sent from a sender address to a second address, rejected at the second address and transmitted back to the sender address, the e-mail message including a non-preferred e-mail address associated with a first service provider, the method comprising the steps of:

- receiving the e-mail message at an intermediate address;

- parsing the e-mail message to obtain the non-preferred e-mail address from the e-mail message;

- determining whether there is a preferred e-mail address, that is associated with a second service provider, from the non-preferred e-mail address; and

- storing, at a location associated with the intermediate address, the non-preferred recipient e-mail address when it is determined that there is no preferred recipient e-mail address associated with the non-preferred e-mail address.

Claims 33-36 (canceled).